

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

**Genome BC is committed to listening to Indigenous leaders and partners** — we recognize and respect the unique worldview of Indigenous peoples. We will need to take bold and courageous action and step out of the colonial constructs to create spaces that are inclusive of this work.

We understand that Indigenous research and innovation is contextualized by the rich languages, histories, experiences, and worldviews of Indigenous peoples. This will require a human centred design approach to ensure our programs are culturally relevant and meaningful. This work is guided by Indigenous peoples and is constantly evolving and will be adjusted as Genome BC benefits from ongoing engagement and support of Indigenous priorities.

Therefore, the purpose of the **Indigenous Peoples Engagement Framework** is to empower Indigenous innovation through partnerships that deliver solutions to the most pressing challenges — as identified by Indigenous peoples. Driving meaningful change, as *articulated by Indigenous peoples*.

The Indigenous Peoples Engagement Framework highlights our path forward and reflects the unique needs, strengths and realities of Indigenous communities and other equity deserving groups. Our goals within the Indigenous context are to:

- Create safe and inclusive spaces by educating the Genome BC board and staff on our shared colonial narrative to strengthen cultural competency.
- Create equitable access to, and reduce barriers for, Indigenous-led innovators, researchers, businesses, and entrepreneurs to work with Genome BC.
- Build meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples to increase Genome BC's understanding of the needs of Indigenous peoples and identify 'omics research and innovation that can address pressing challenges.



# The Genome BC Indigenous Peoples Engagement Framework will be comprised of the following three pillars:

## 1.) ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURAL COMPETENCY (BOARD/STAFF STRENGTH)

This pillar encompasses two key elements. The first is cultural competency or agility in understanding our shared colonial narrative, which is critical for Genome BC staff to be able to engage in a meaningful and respectful way with Indigenous communities. The second addresses organizational governance. Genome BC is committed to maintaining Indigenous representation on our board of directors and providing all board members with access to Indigenous cultural competency training.

Genome BC will advance reconciliation by providing ongoing training to governance and staff. The Truth and Reconciliations 92nd call to action states, “Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism”.

In addition to ongoing training opportunities for staff and board, Genome BC will introduce an Elder in-Residence opportunity to provide further education, awareness and competency support to all staff as we develop our action plan and build out our Indigenous Peoples Engagement Framework.

## 2.) INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES

Decolonization means we proactively remove systemic barriers for Indigenous peoples to enter our workforce, and to participate in our programs. Genome BC will work to ensure we are creating safe and inclusive spaces by developing meaningful, and respectful relationships with Indigenous rightsholders.

Genome BC's Research and Innovation programs are at the heart of our business therefore it is imperative we review our programs and activities through the lens of understanding barriers to Indigenous access and inclusion.

Genome BC will incorporate best practices in program design and collect data to best understand what barriers Indigenous scholars, researchers, innovators, and communities face when trying to access Genome BC's programs and funding opportunities. This work will be driven by data collected from Indigenous peoples to ensure that the voices of the individuals who we wish to serve are at the centre of this work.

## 3.) CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Building strong long-lasting relationships with Indigenous peoples is integral to the Indigenous Peoples Engagement Framework. We understand that we must walk alongside Indigenous peoples and listen and learn from their valuable worldviews. Genome BC has already had successful projects with Indigenous communities so we will be looking to deepen our existing relationships and expand on the success of our past and existing projects while building new relationships.

Genome BC will also create an Indigenous advisory committee that will provide expert advice on developing Indigenous relationships, understand Indigenous views on partnerships and projects and help build Indigenous capacity in genomics throughout the province to help guide and evolve the Genome BC Indigenous Peoples Engagement Framework. The Indigenous advisory committee will strive to be comprised of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit representation from across sectors and disciplines.





Two Row Wampum – Gaswéñdah – Onondaga Nation

## THE PATH FORWARD

This document will serve as a path forward for Genome BC to create safe and inclusive spaces in which Indigenous peoples feel they belong, have access and that their worldviews and knowledge systems are as important as Western knowledge systems. This is depicted in the two-row wampum belt, “In one row is a ship with our White Brothers’ ways; in the other a canoe with our ways. Each will travel down the river of life side by side. Neither will attempt to steer the other’s vessel.” Two Row Wampum – Gaswéñdah – Onondaga Nation

Success will be assessed by the expanded participation of Indigenous peoples and communities in Genome BC’s programs and activities. Particularly important in the Canadian context is Genome BC’s role in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and communities, which carries an expanded responsibility given Canada’s colonial history. Finally, an important aim will be to highlight the importance of societal impact as an overall objective of Genome BC, where this must be defined more broadly than economic impact. When Indigenous peoples succeed all of Canada succeeds.

“Oh God! Like the thunderbird of the old I shall rise again out of the sea; I shall grab the instruments of the white man’s success – his education, his tools, and I shall build my race into the proudest segment of your society.”

~ Chief Dan George

